

## **CAMB Thesis Committee – Responsibilities and Expectations**

### Thesis Committee Responsibilities

The primary charge of a thesis committee is to evaluate the scientific progress of the student and to suggest directions in research that will culminate in a successful thesis. The committee as a whole, and as individual members, should be willing as well to help in other facets of the student's scientific and professional development.

Effective mentorship from members of a thesis committee involves:

- Critical evaluation of the student's scientific progress, and of the competencies that relate to scientific pursuit in general.
- Feedback to the thesis mentor and/or student regarding feasibility of research goals and plans, especially when the proposed plan is incompatible with timely completion of the thesis.
- Cross-checks on training in responsible conduct of research and experimental design as it relates to reproducibility, verifying that the lab notebook is complete and well-managed.
- An active interest in the student's professional development, using the student's IDP as one point of discussion.
- Interactions that promote open dialog on science, skills, interests, and aspirations.
- A willingness to step in should problems in the dynamics between the student and thesis mentor and/or other elements of the research environment be recognized.

### Responsibilities of the Thesis Committee Chair

The chair of the thesis committee plays the primary role in ensuring that the committee meets all of its responsibilities.

- Review student progress report, plans and IDP prior to the thesis committee meeting (provided by student one week prior to meeting).
- Prepare thesis committee meeting evaluation report and distribute to committee, student, advisor and CAMB office within one week of meeting. Please make substantive recommendations and define expectations. The full committee must approve the report.
- Communicate any concerns about student progress/plans or student-advisor interaction to program chair immediately following the thesis committee meeting.
- Serve as a key advocate for student success, being available to discuss any issues of importance, including thesis project, career planning, etc.

### Granting Permission to Write and Defend the Thesis

The Graduate Group requires a dissertation that represents a definitive contribution to scientific knowledge and that demonstrates the student's ability to perform independent research. The dissertation should contain experimental information that answers a stated question and should display a logical progression of scientific thought. At least one lead-author peer-reviewed research publication should be in press prior to the granting of permission to write and defend the thesis. The thesis

committee has the final authority to grant permission to write and defend the thesis. However, in cases where this standard is not met, the thesis committee must consult with the Program Chair prior to granting permission to write the thesis.

When permission to write is granted, the "Permission to Write" form (found in the CAMB Handbook) must be signed by the committee chair and thesis advisor and returned to the Graduate Group Office. The committee should also agree on a timeline that includes an approximate date for the defense. This is necessary to ensure that a defense schedule convenient for all committee members can be arranged and that an appropriate room can be reserved. A draft of the thesis must be presented to each committee member and the CAMB office no later than two weeks prior to the scheduled defense. Failure to do this may result in cancellation of the scheduled thesis defense. Prior to distributing the dissertation to the thesis committee, it must be approved by the thesis advisor. It is typical for members of the thesis committee to ask for revisions prior to the dissertation's final submission; such revisions can also be requested at the thesis defense.

#### Permission to Write and Defend Checklist

- Does the student meet the CAMB publication requirement? Exceptions to this requirement must be discussed with the program chair prior to granting permission to write. If permission is given prior to meeting the publication requirement is manuscript submission/acceptance required before proceeding to the defense?
- The Permission to Write form must be signed by the mentor and thesis committee chair and returned to the CAMB office.
- Scheduling of the defense can be done prior to meeting required conditions, if any, but public advertising of the defense must wait until all conditions set by the committee have been met.
- A minimum of 2 weeks before the defense date the completed thesis must be submitted to the thesis committee and CAMB office.
- Upon receipt of the thesis, committee members should thoroughly review the document and immediately inform the student and mentor if the document does not meet expectations and/or is unacceptable for any reason.
- If after the defense the committee is not ready to sign-off on graduation paperwork, a specific plan including timeframe, should be submitted to the program chair and CAMB office.